

# IDALIA:

OR, THE

*Unfortunate Mistress.*

A

## NOVEL.

---

Written by Mrs. ELIZA HAYWOOD.

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*Under how hard a Fate are Women born !  
Priz'd to their Ruin, or expos'd to Scorn :  
If we want Beauty, we of Love despair ;  
And are besieg'd, like Frontier Towns, if Fair.*

Waller.

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M.DCC.XXIII.

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Price One Shilling and Sixpence.

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EDWARD  
ALIA

*W. Musgrave.*

Authoritative Military

A

NOV E L

Written by Miss ASA HYWOOD.  


... a staff's hand, used when  
... or when it is not in use,  
... to hold it upright.  
... a sword, when it is not in  
... or when it is not in use,  
... to hold it upright.

1000

... to hold it upright.  
... a sword, when it is not in use,  
... to hold it upright.  
... a sword, when it is not in use,  
... to hold it upright.

EDWARD ALIA

you will be no better off than if you  
should be possessed of one hundred  
pounds.



THE DIALOGUE OF IDALIA,  
AND CERBERUS; OR,  
**I D A L I A :**  
OR

## *The Unfortunate Mistress.*



F there were a Possibility that  
the Warmth and Vigour of  
Youth could be temper'd with  
a due Consideration, and the  
Power of Judging rightly ;  
how easy were it to avoid the  
Ills which most of us endure ?

How few would be unhappy ? With what  
Serenity might the *Noon* of Life glide on,  
could we account with reason for our *Morning*  
*Actions* ! We hear, indeed, daily Complaints  
of the Cruelty of *Fate*, but if we examine the  
Source, we shall find almost all the Woes we  
languish under are self-caus'd ; and that either

to pursue the Gratification of some unruly Passion, or fly the Performance of an incumbent Duty, those Misfortunes which so fill the World derive their Being: and would more justly merit *Condemnation* than *Compassion*, were not the Fault too universal.

DO N *Bernardo de Bellfache*, a Nobleman of *Venice*, had a Daughter whom he esteem'd the Blessing of his Age; and had her Conduct been such as might have been expected from the Elegance of her Genius and the Improvements of Education which his Fondness had indulg'd her in, she had indeed been the Wonder of her Sex. Imagination cannot form a Face more exquisitely Lovely; such Majesty, such Sweetness, such a Regularity in all her Features, accompany'd with an Air at once so soft, so striking, that while she commanded she allur'd, and forc'd what she entreated. Nor was her Shape and Mien less worthy Admiration; it was impossible for any thing to be more exactly proportion'd than the former, and for the latter it had a Grace peculiar to itself: the least and most careless Motion of her Head or Hand, was sufficient to captivate a Heart. In fine, her Charms were so infinitely above description, that it was necessary to see her, to have any just Notion of her.—But alas! to what end serv'd all this Beauty, these uncommon Qualifications, but to make her more remarkably unhappy? She had a *W<sup>n</sup>*, which gain'd her no fewer Adorers than her other Perfections; yet not enough to defend her from the Assaults of almost every Passion Human Nature is liable to fall into. The Greatness

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ness of her Spirit (which from her Childhood had been untameable, or was render'd so thro the too great Indulgence of her doating Parents) made her unable to endure Controll, disdainful of Advice, obstinate, and peremptory in following her own *Will* to what Extremes soever it led her: The Consequence of such a Disposition could not be expected to be very fortunate, but it brought on her such dreadful Inconveniences, as all who find in themselves the least Propensity to be of such a Humour, ought to tremble at the Repetition of, and exert their utmost Reason to extirpate.

*ID ALIA* (for that was the Name of this Lovely Inconsiderate) had no sooner arriv'd at her Fourteenth Year, than she attracted the Eyes of all the young Noblemen of *Venice*; scarce a Heart but sigh'd for her: The Shrine of our *Blessed Lady of Loreto* was never throng'd with greater numbers of Religious Devotees than Don *Bernardo's House* was by those of the Young and Gay; and happy did they think themselves whose Birth or Fortune gave them any just cause to hope the Pretensions they brought would be an Offering worthy acceptance. There were some too (as no Climate is barren of *Fops*) who had the Vanity, without either of these Advantages, to promise themselves Success; of this last number was *Florez*, one who if he had not been possess'd with more Assurance than is ordinarily to be found even among the most Tenacious, would not have presumed, tho his Passion had been really as violent as he endeavour'd to make it appear,

to have declared it. He was descended from a Family in which there never had been one whose Actions had entitled him to bear Arms ; the height of his Parents Ambition had been to prefer him, when a Child, to be Page to *Don Ferdinand* Nephew to the *Doge* : With this young Nobleman he had travell'd, and all the Education he was master of, was owing to this Advantage ; as was the Post he posseſſ'd in the Army, to his Favour. For being naturally of a designing sordid Disposition, by falling in with all his Humours, promoting his Pleasures, and flattering his Vices, he had wound himself so much into the Good-will of his Lord, that he refused him nothing. The Intimacy with which he was treated by so great a Man, and the sudden Elevation of his Fortune, join'd to some fulsome Praises of his Beauty, and fine Air, which those Women who are paid for their Favours generally lavish on the Person who makes choice of them, gave him so good an opinion of his own Merit, that he thought it an Impossibility for any Woman to be insensible of it, and look'd on the Attainment of *Idalia*, notwithstanding the multitude of her Admirers, and the vast Possessions she was likely to be mistress of, as a thing not at all difficult.

BUT whatever he imagin'd to himself, *Bernardo* had Sentiments quite different from these : He no sooner discover'd his Design, than he forbade him his House in terms which sufficiently told him he was in earnest, and chid his Daughter for entertaining a Proposal so unsuitable to her Birth, with more sharpness

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ness than the manner in which he had ever behaved to her could give her leave to think was in his Nature. But as the Vanity and unthinking Pride which sway'd the Actions of this young Lady had show'd itself in the encouraging all who pretended to admire her, of what degree soever they were ; so now the Obsturacy of her Humour began to appear, in the Uneasiness she felt at her Father's Commands, never to see *Florez* more. Amidst the multiplicity of her Adorers, she thought herself undone to miss the Addresses of a single Votary, and could not bear to lose the Conversation of a Man whose Eyes and Tongue were perfectly skill'd in the Art of Flattery and Dissimulation, and had given her so many Informations of her Power. And wholly leaving herself to the Dictates of her Impatience, grew almost distracted to think she was debarr'd the Enjoyment of any thing she found a pleasure in. She began immediately to lessen her Regard for her too long indulgent Father, which by degrees ripen'd to a Contempt of him, and ended in a Resolution to act in every thing according to her Inclinations, without giving herself any pain how far it would be consonant to his.

IN this ruinous Disposition it came into her head to write to *Florez*, not that she was really in *Love* with him, or had yet any notion of that Passion ; but *Vanity*, that reigning Faculty of her Soul, prompted her to use her utmost Efforts for the retrieving a Heart she began to fear was estranged. And indeed this Conjecture was not in the least unreasonable ;

for

for had he, in sincerity, been so entirely devoted to her as he had once endeavour'd to persuade her he was, Love always fruitful in Invention would have furnish'd him with some Stratagem, either to have seen her or convey'd a Letter to her ; for some Weeks had pass'd between the time of his being forbid his Visits, and that in which she writ. She did not fail to upbraid him with his Coldness, but withall let him know she had Good-nature enough to pardon it ; desired an Answer, and that for the future, if she was really happy enough to retain any place in his Remembrance, he would let no Day escape without giving her some Assurances of it. In short, no Woman who felt the severest Pangs of desperate dying Love could write more passionately, or express a greater Concern at being abandon'd by the Man her Soul was fond of, than what the Spirit of Coquetry taught the Pen of the Inconsiderate *Idalia*. She concluded her Epistle with a hearty Wish, *Grant Heaven!* (said she to herself) *that I may once more have him in my power to use him as I please, let the Consequence be what it will.* She bribed a Servant to deliver it, and bring an Answer back ; but the Uneasiness she was in till the Return of her Messenger, was such, as whoever had been witness of, could not have imagin'd to have sprung from any other Source than Love. But to such a degree does the inimoderate Love of Praise transport some People, that to lose any opportunity of receiving it, is a Tortment equal to that which others feel in a Disappointment of the most essential Blessings.

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THE Return of her Emissary brought but little Ease to the Suspence she had endur'd while he was gone: *Florez* indeed had sent by him, but his Letter appear'd so different from those she had formerly receiv'd from him, that the Hand was all that show'd 'em writ by the same Person. A Penetration like hers could easily discern the Alteration; she found the Stile was forc'd, formal, and affected, and where he said he still continu'd to adore her, and should never cease to do so, it was in such a manner as plainly show'd his Heart had no part in dictating such Expressions: And, in truth, never Woman was more disappointed in her Aim, than was this Lady. In spite of the Attractions she was mistress of, *Florez* had either an Insensibility of them, or had Resolution enough to withstand the Emotions of his Tenderness, whenever he found 'em contrary to his Interest. 'Tis probable, by what after ensu'd, that a Daughter of Don *Bernardo*'s, tho' never so disagreeable, would have had Charms sufficient to have retain'd his Adorations; but *Idalia*, all lovely as she was, without the addition of that Fortune her Father's Consent must give, had no longer any Charms to hold him.

"TIS easy to imagine it was no small shock to her Pride, to find the Advances she had made were receiv'd with no more Warmth: but suffering all Considerations to be wholly drown'd in the o'erflowing Folly which at present possess'd her, she continued daily by Letters to give him occasion to believe there  
was

was nothing on Earth so desirable as his Conversation, and that it was not impossible she might be prevail'd on to become his Wife, tho by it she should lose a Father ; but there was not the least Pressure in any of his Answers, which testified he wish'd she should run so great a risque. This so nettled her, that at last, 'tis probable, she would have lock'd upon him, as indeed he was, a Conquest far unworthy of the pains she had taken. She was just beginning to give over all thoughts of him, when her ill Fate taking the advantage of the *Baseness* of his Nature, and the unaccountable *Fantastickness* of her's, gave a sudden Turn to this Adventure, which was to terminate in her utter undoing.

IF there can be any thing to be alledg'd in the Defence of Vanity, the fair *Idalia* on the account of her Youth, her Beauty, Birth, and Fortune, had certainly more to plead in her behalf than where there were none of these Advantages. *Florez*, who had nothing distinguishably valuable either in his Person or Accomplishments, and was of a Sex in which that *Foible* is far less excusable than in the weaker ; had yet as large a share : he could not imagine himself belov'd by a Woman so admired by all the World, without communicating the Secret. To those *Insensibles* all the Pleasure of an *Amour* consists in the *Reputation* of it. To be accounted well in the Esteem of a Person of ordinary Qualifications, yields them infinitely more Satisfaction than the *real Enjoyment* of one of the most *Excellent* could do. It is not therefore to be wonder'd at, that a Man, who

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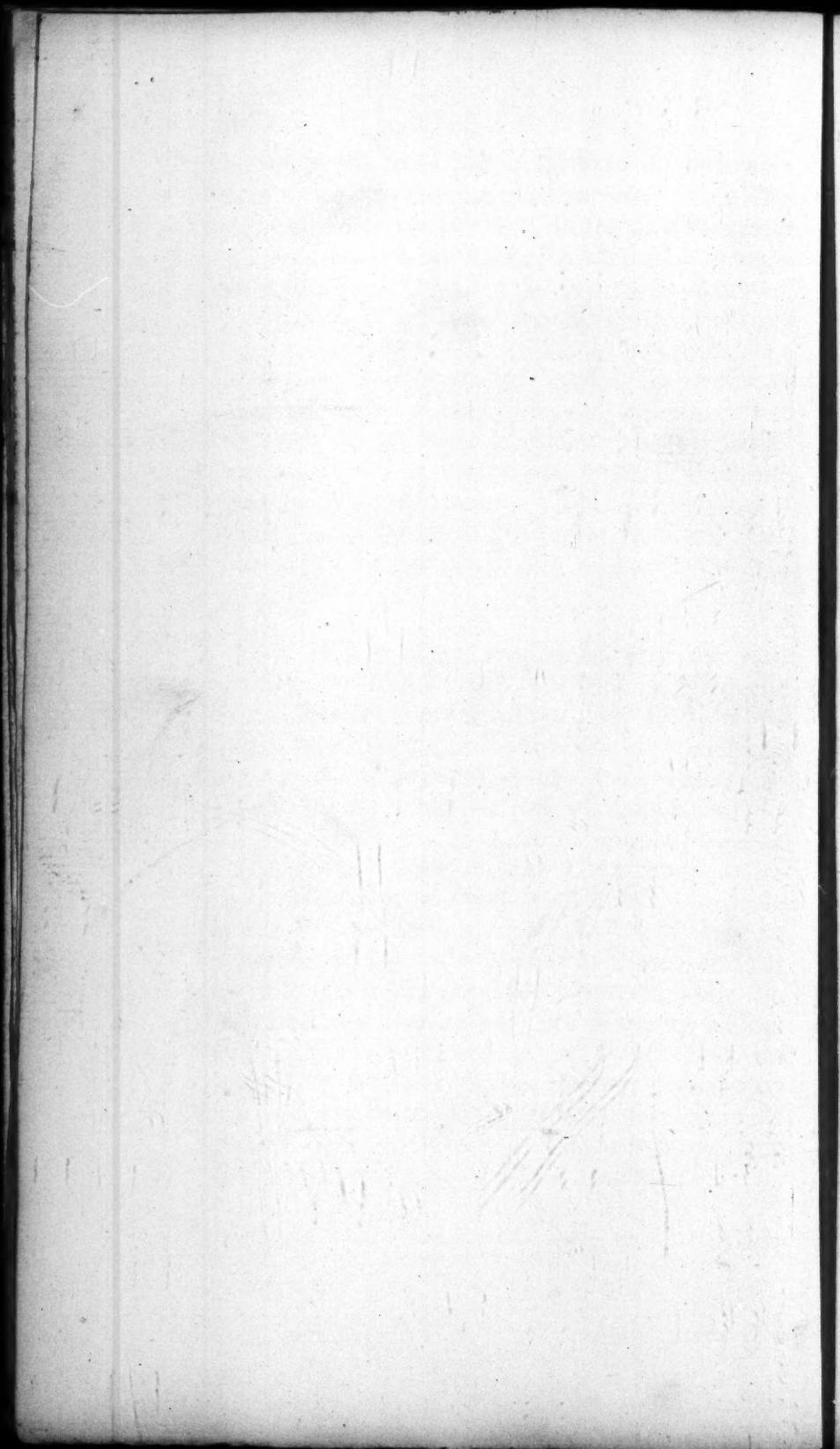
who had neither Love nor Honour to restrain him, triumph'd in an Affair like this : He could not hear the Charms of *Idalia* mention'd without letting the Company know how much it was in his power to become master of them ; and to prove the Truth of what he said, expos'd her Letters, those fatal and undisputable Testimonials of her Folly. Few that had any acquaintance with him, were strangers to his Happiness, but none more envy'd his Good-fortune than his Patron *Don Ferdinand*. This young Lord was of a Disposition exceeding amorous : He long had view'd *Idalia* with those Desires which it was common for her to inspire, but finding in himself not the least Propensity to Marriage, and believing it impossible to obtain her by any other means, had endeavour'd to stifle the hopeless Passion by other Amusements, till hearing the Condescensions she had made to one whom he had so much power over, he immediately had it in his thoughts to make use of it for the Gratification of his Wishes. There needed but little Ceremony in the communicating his Design to a Person so much his Creature ; nor durst *Flores*, if he had had an Inclination, oppose what he required ; but on the contrary, he was glad of an Opportunity of serving him in a manner which would so considerably advance his Interest with him. It was presently agreed between them, that he, the favour'd Lover, should write to *Idalia* in the most passionate and moving strain imaginable, assuring her that nothing was so insupportable as the Pangs of Absence, that he died to see her, and entreat her to grant him that Favour.

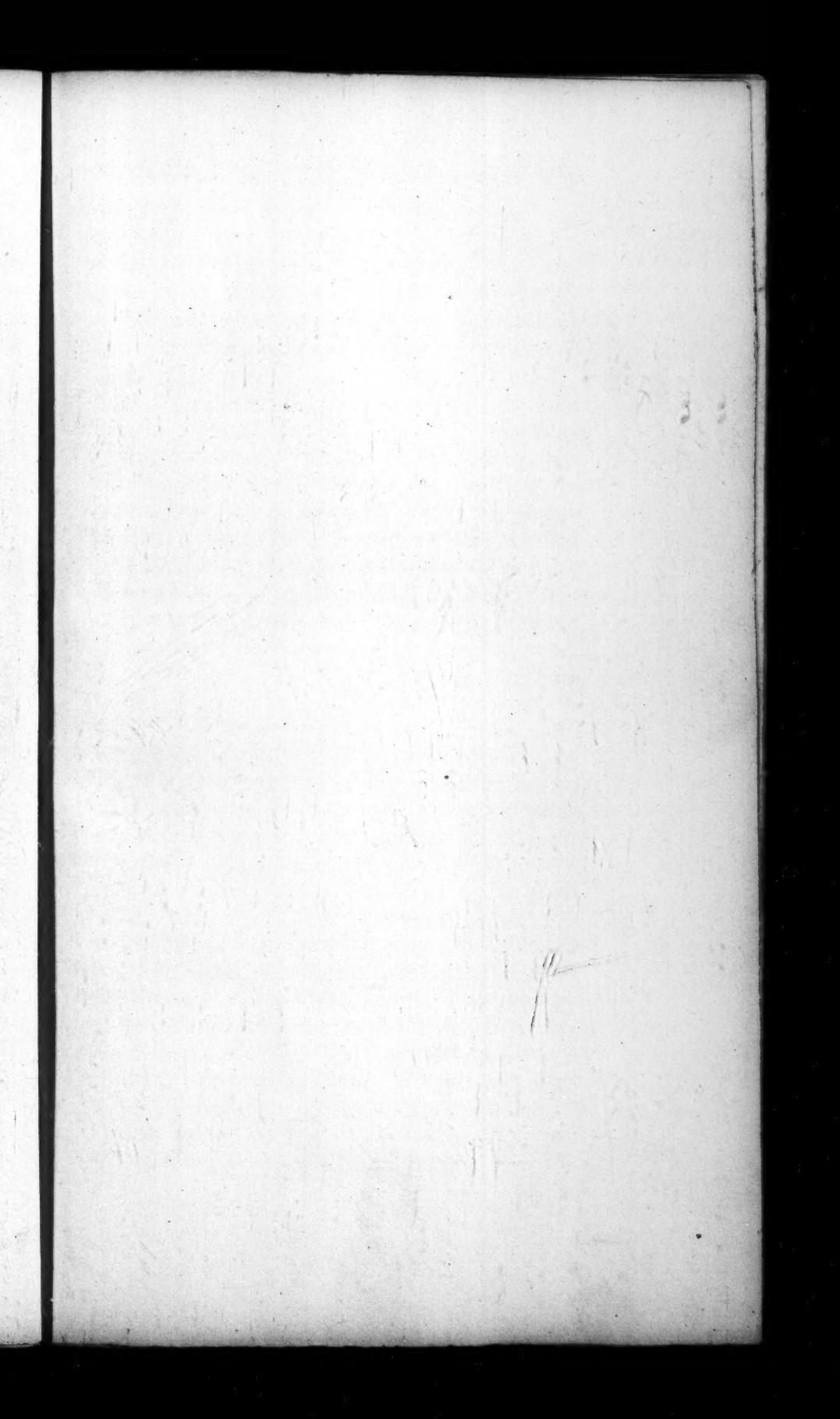
at the House of a particular Friend, whom he mention'd in the Letter, and gave her Directions how to find it. This Epistle being dictated by the impatient Wishes of the amorous *Ferdinand*, had infinitely more force of Persuasion in it, than any thing the Insensible *Florez* could have said without his assistance; and they both promised themselves it would succeed as they would have it, to engage her to come to the place appointed for the Assig-nation, which was a House where they had frequently rioted in those dissolute Enjoyments Youth is too prone to be fond of, and the Peo-ple who lived in it entirely at the devotion of *Don Ferdinand*.

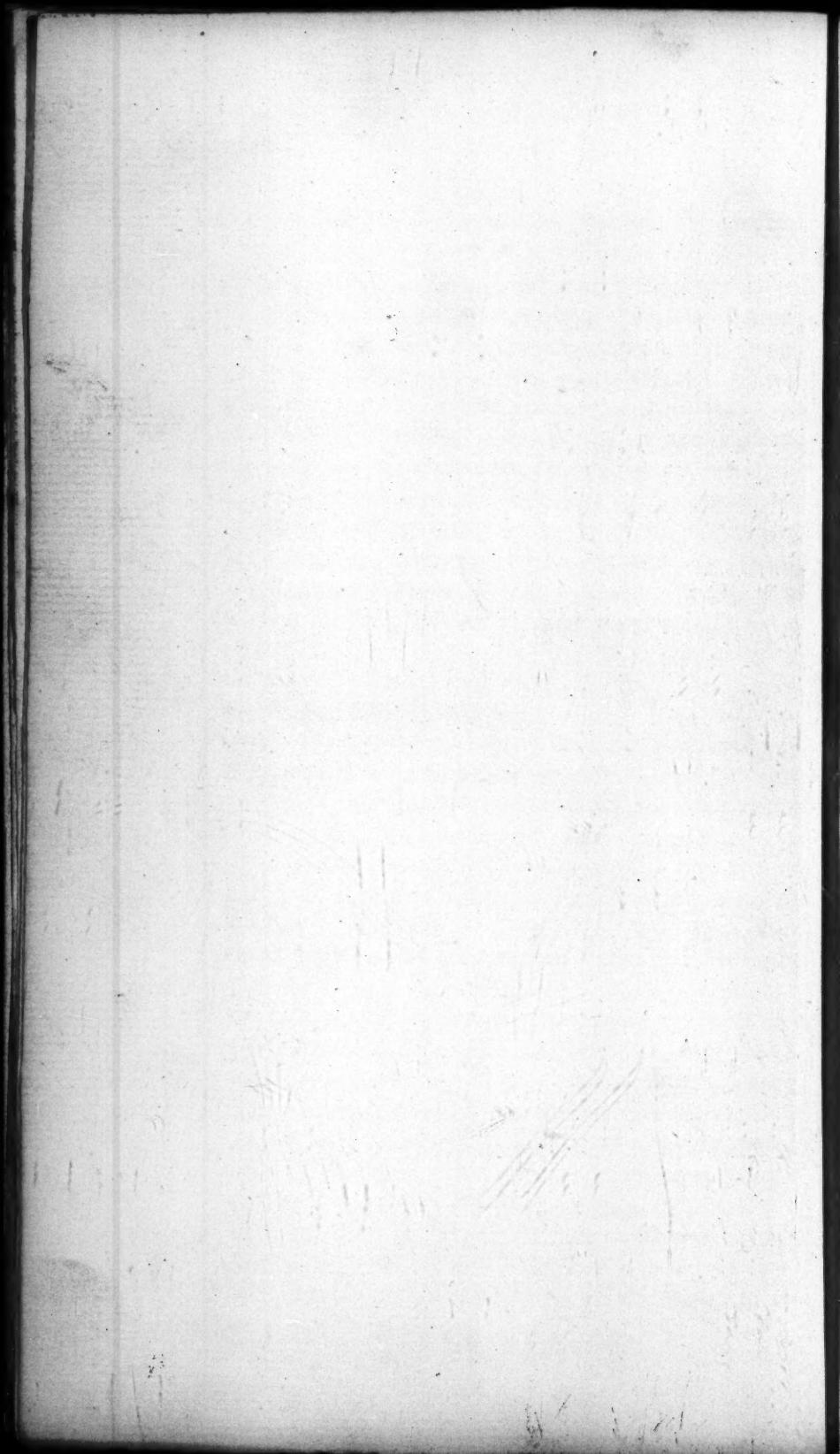
BY this cursed Contrivance was the rash unthinking *Idalia* betray'd: She receiv'd the fraudulent Mandate, swallow'd the well-dress'd artful Flattery it contain'd with a prodigious deal of Pleasure, and return'd an Answer of Consent. Not that she was without a thought at the liberty he took in naming a Place of Assig-nation; since it had been much more agreeable to the *Venetian* Address, to have watch'd her coming out, follow'd her to Church, or any other publick Place, and at an humble Distance gazed upon her: but she imputed his Boldness to the Violence of his Passion, and having no other design than to make him the Slave of her Beauty, resolv'd to see him, the better to secure her Conquest, and punish him hereafter by her Contempt and Coldness, for his present Presumption.

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gentle Means to bring her to herself, and expressing the most tender Concern imaginable for the Disorder he had occasion'd her, she began at the return of Thought to hope his Sentiments were chang'd; and falling on her Knees, the moment she recovered, 'Oh! my Lord, said she, if Honour, Love, or Pity have any influence o'er your Soul, by that I would conjure you to forbear to fright a wretched Maid, whom Inadvertency has thrown into your power.—Permit me to depart uninjur'd, unpolluted, and here I swear by every thing that's sacred, of all your Sex you shall be dearest to me.—O moving Words! interrupted Ferdinand, what Wonders may they not inforce! Is it then possible that you do not hate me?—But, continued he with a Sigh, how full of Vanity must I be to credit them!—No, Madam, no, the Artifice is plain; you fear my Power, and would delude my Wishes by a false Hope: but know I love too well, too violently, to leave aught to hereafter, which this Moment may bestow.—If you would have me think you mean my Happiness, give me an instant Proof.—Now make me blest, and I shall feed Imagination with hope of future Favours.'—In speaking this, he mingled some Freedoms, which left but little room to hope that any thing could save her; yet thinking still to sooth him would be the most effectual way, 'Oh Heavens! resumed she, (struggling with all her Force) will you not then allow something to my Sex's Modesty? Time, and Assiduity, may make me yours, and spare you the Guilt of Force.'—He would

would not suffer her to proceed, but renewing his Pressures, ‘ To wait a slow Consent, said he, would little suit the Violence of a Passion such as I profess : The God of Love disdains all dull Delays.—Swiftly the zealous Voluntary rushes on his Wish, and baffles Opposition ; cuts off, at once, Sighs, Tears, Entreaties, all the Repulses that stubborn Virtue, or Affectation inspire in the relentless Fair, and proves the *Deity*, indeed, Almighty.—Believe me, Lovely Maid, the whining Wretch who sues at slavish Distance, dies at your feet, nor dares aspire to seize what Passion aims at, is but in show a Lover, the Flame he boasts, enervate, weak, and spiritless like his Attacks : but I by Deeds shall testify how much—How much thou art a Villain, (*cry'd Idalia, transported at once with Horror, Shame, and Rage*) Thou Monster ! thou Brutal Ravisher ! But since thou hast lost all Regard due to thy own Honour, and my Birth and Fame, die (*continued she, snatching a Dagger, which, his upper Garment flying open in the Struggle, just then discovered itself*) die by her Hand whom thou so basely dost attempt to wrong.’ It was as much as he could do, by leaping lightly from her, to ward the Blow her Indignation had design'd. It would have been easy for him to have wrested it from her afterwards ; but she perceiving his Intent, turn'd the Point to her own Breast, and invoking all the Saints and Angels to be witnesses of her Vow, swore she would strike it thro' her Heart the moment he attempted to disarm her. ‘ No, barbarous Man (*pursu'd she*) whatever mistaken No-  
Blow tions

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tions the Levity and fond Belief of some of our weak Sex may have inspired thee with, thou now shalt find there's one among us who dares meet Death to fly Dishonour— Since deaf to all the Considerations of my noble Family, and *Bernardo's* Power, behold and tremble at my *Virtue's* Bravery!—Blest now with means to escape thy vile Design, I can no longer fear thee, nor need debase my just Disdain so far as to entreat thee. The Fire which now darted from her Eyes, the assured Accent of her Voice, and the resolute Air of all her Motions, sufficiently declared she would make no scruple of fulfilling the Protestation she had made: Don *Ferdinand* was too sensibly alarm'd at it, to put it to the venture, but immediately form'd a Stratagem which seem'd more likely to succeed. Making use, therefore, of that Dissimulation which those who study the undoing Art are so well vers'd in, he dress'd his Eyes, and Face, in Looks far different from those they lately wore; an humble Admiration now seem'd to take up all his Thoughts, and aw'd Desire seem'd fearful to appear. He prostrated himself before her, acknowledged the Temerity of his Attempt, conjured her either to forgive him, or plunge the Dagger where she first design'd it, swore he would not live in her Displeasure; and accompanied all he said with so many Sighs, and such well-counterfeited Contrition, that either her Vanity, (which often inclines Women too readily to pardon those Faults which they imagine caused by the Force of their own Charms, and the Violence of the Lover's Passion) her Good-Nature, or perhaps

haps a secret Liking of his Person, made it impossible for her to deny what he so earnestly entreated : the Grant, however, was not without Limitation ; she forgave all he had done, but on condition he never should repeat it, and that he would not oppose her immediate Return to her Father's House. "Far be it from my Thoughts," replied the artful Ferdinand ; "this moment would I deny my fond, gazing, Eyes the Joy of looking on you, had I not yet one Request to make, which if refused, I have no more to do but die." "What is it ? said Idalia ; after having obtain'd a Pardon for your injurious Design upon my Honour, it must be something beyond what I can comprehend that I should think difficult to grant." — "Love ever is accompanied with Fears," resumed he ; and that it is something relating to that, the Terrors I am in to ask it, may inform you. Let me conjure you then, by all that Heavenly Softness in your Disposition, to tell me, and tell me truly, (for fain would I flatter my ambitious Wishes with a Hope my Services in time might move you) if I can gain your Noble Father's Leave to make my humble Application, will you consent to hear me ? Is not there something in my Form, or Manner, which will repel the soft Efforts of Love ? — O speak ! (continued he, perceiving she was silent). I dread the Certainty, yet am unable to endure the Tortures of Suspence." — "I know not, answer'd she, blushing, if it be consistent with a Virgin's Modesty to answer a Demand like this, but something sure must be allow'd to the Quality and Merits of Don Ferdinand.

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nor will my Sex condemn my easy Nature,  
when to such exalted Accomplishments I  
throw off Affection, and confess I shall  
with Pride, and Pleasure, listen to the Vows  
my Father shall command me to receive from  
you.

THO nothing could be more distant from the Soul of Don Ferdinand than the Design of solliciting *Bernardo* on any such account, yet the feigning it was of infinite service to gain Time, which was all he wanted : Examining the Hours, they found the Night was so far spent, that *Idalia* was at her wits end to think what Excuse she should make for her long Absence. Ferdinand taking the advantage of her Fear, ‘Madam,’ said he, ‘tho I much doubt all I can say, after the Presumption I have been guilty of, will be suspected, I would advise you not to go home till Morning : You will have time enough by then to think of something plausible to allay your Father’s Concern,—or you may go early to some Lady of your Acquaintance, and engage her to pretend you have been with her all night.— Till then, this House is at your devotion ; you shall be serv’d in all as you command, and to prevent your Fears of my relapsing into my late Error, I will myself go out of it.’ What cannot an artful Dissimulation engage one to ! *Idalia* believed him now so entirely her Convert, that what he counsell’d did not in the least alarm her ; and the good Opinion she now had of him, and the Uncertainty in what manner she should excuse herself at home, made her willing to accept it.

She had a little shock, however, at lying at a House, which by the Liberties Don Ferdinand had taken in it she could not imagine to be held by People of Honour: but the seeming penitent Lover removing that Scruple by assuring her that they were so much at his devotion, that as soon as they saw there was an Alteration in his Humour, theirs would immediately acquiesce; she at last consented to remain there till Morning, but told him she expected the Performance of his Promise of going away himself. ‘ Madam (answered he) not all the Reluctance I feel in myself at quitting the Roof where all my Hopes are treasur’d, shall oblige me to disobey you: I go this moment, and that no needless Fears may disturb the Repose I wish you, I intreat you will see me from the Door, and take with you the Key which alone could be the Passport to admit me here again.’ Idalia was so well pleas’d with the Care he express’d of her Quiet, that she again, at his entreaty, confirm’d the Pardon she had already granted, and took leave of him with a Countenance which testified her Words were in no way contradictory to her Heart.

AFTER his Departure, having taken the Key, as he desired her to do, into her possession, she suffer’d herself to be conducted by the People of the House into a Chamber, and was not long before she went to bed: but it was impossible for Sleep to have any power over her; Imagination was too busy to suffer the dull God’s approach, the pleasure she took in being admir’d was too much rooted in her

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her Nature, for the late Danger it had brought her into, to erase ; and the Joy of having an Adorer such as *Don Ferdinand*, made full amends for the Frights some part of his Behaviour had put her in. From this Contemplation, which afforded her only Delight, she fell into one altogether as vexatious, which was the Neglect that *Florez* had treated her with, in not coming to the Place he had appointed her to be at ; and if she could have believed it possible for any Man, who had seen her, to resign her to a Rival, she would not have been a stranger to the Truth : for she, as well as all who had any acquaintance with him, was sensible of the Obligations he had to *Ferdinand*. But this was the last Reason she could form, it was not without the greatest difficulty in the world she could bring herself to any Notion of it, and perhaps should have found out some other Motive for his Behaviour, less disagreeable to her to believe, if her Cogitations had not met with an Interruption she was far from thinking of.

SHE had look'd on herself as safe, where she now was, as in her Father's House, thro' the double Security of her Lover's Conversion and having the Key of the Door ; but, alas ! she too soon discover'd her Mistake. She had not been an hour in Bed, before she felt the Clothes thrown off, and something catch fast hold of her : The Voice and Actions of the Person told her it was no other than *Don Ferdinand*, as did his own Behaviour and Confession afterward, that the Story of his Repentance was but forg'd, the easier to betray her, and

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the Delivery of the Key only an Artifice to engage her Trust ; there being a Back-Door to the House, by which he immediately entered, and came into the Chamber thro' a Closet, which had a Passage into another Room.

WHAT was now the Distraction of this unhappy Lady, waked from her Dream of Vanity to certain Ruin ! Unavoidable Destruction ! She rav'd, she tore, did all that Woman could, but all in vain—— In the midst of Shrieks and Tremblings, Cries, Curses, Swoonings, the impatient Ferdinand perpetrated his Intent, and finished her Undoing.

IN the mean time, the careful Father had been in all the Anxiety imaginable, he had sent to every Place where he had hope to find her, in search of his Darling Daughter ; till at last, all his Endeavours being vain, and the Lateness of the Night not bringing her, assured him she could not be detained by any Occasion which could merit his Approbation, he flew to her Chamber, broke open her Cabinet, believing there might be a Probability of some Discovery ; and finding there the Letters she had received from Florez, and, amongst the rest, that last fatal one which mention'd the Place of Affigitation, he concluded her lost ; that either she had disposed of herself to some unworthy Match, or had been deluded into a much worse Inconvenience : He could do nothing till Morning, either for his Satisfaction or Revenge ; and all who have known the Grief of a beloved Child's Undoing, will easily guess at his. At break of day he sent to the

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the Officers of Justice for a *Mission* to search that House, and produced the Paper which had occasion'd his requiring it: it was immediately granted, and he had soon been inform'd of the whole Transaction, had not the strangest Accident that ever was, skreen'd the injurious Contrivers of it for some time from the Punishments their Crime was worthy of.

*DON Ferdinand* was endeavouring by all the Persuasions he was Master of, to bring the ruin'd Fair to an opinion she was not so unhappy as she thought herself; but all that he could say was ineffectual to give a moment's Cessation to the Tempest of her Fury: had any Means of Death been in her power, she would certainly not have out-lived the Loss of Honour; but as he had taken care of that, all she could do was to lament it. As they were thus employ'd, a loud knocking at the Chamber-Door obliged the surpriz'd Lover to quit his Bed, and see what had occasion'd it. It was *Florez*, who happening to pass by *Don Bernardo*'s Door, had seen a great Croud about it, and enquiring the Reason, was told they were going in search of the young Lady of that House, who 'twas thought had been convey'd away by a Gentleman who pretended to court her.—This News was sufficient to alarm the guilty Soul of him 'twas told to, and not doubting but every thing was discover'd, had hasted to *Ferdinand* to apprise him of it—  
‘Without doubt,’ said he, my Lord, ‘the whole Secret is betray'd, and I, and the People of this House must be inevitably ruin'd, as Abettors of the Fact, unless your In-

' Interest with the Doge is strong enough to protect us.' ' My Interest with my Uncle, reply'd the other very much perplexed, I fear will be too weak even to obtain a Pardon for myself in an Affair like this.—Bernardo is a Senator, and highly esteem'd both by the Court and Populace.—I know not what to think on it.'—He stood for a moment or two after he had spoke this in a pause, and that gave *Idalia*, (who, by the coming of *Florez*, and the Advertisement he brought, knew it was to his Deceit she ow'd her Ruin) liberty to vent some part of her just Rage in Curses and Reproaches. Neither of them in that Confusion seem'd to take much notice of what she said; but Don Ferdinand starting from his musing, and catching up his Clothes, and putting them on as hastily as he could, ' Tis now no time, said he, to answer idle Rail-ing, we must prepare for our common Safety.' As soon as he had spoke these words, he call'd for the Woman of the House, who presently came up, frighted almost to death with the Account she had receiv'd from *Florez*, and ordered her to dress *Idalia* with all the expedition imaginable; bidding her not to be concern'd, for he had bethought him of a Way to retrieve all. But all that he, or she, or *Floren* could do, was not to any purpose to persuade *Idalia* to rise; she seem'd, in the midst of her Anguish, to exult, with hope of Vengeance, and swore she would continue in the very Place and Posture she was in, and, by proclaiming her Wrongs, and the Authors of 'em, put it past the power of all their Artifice to escape the Punishment they fear'd. But alas!

## The Unfortunate Mistress. 25

alas ! her Resolution stood her but in little  
stead on this Occasion ; the imminent Danger  
they were in, made them dispense with Cere-  
mony, and she was taken out of Bed by force,  
and her Clothes, in what manner they could,  
huddled on. As soon as she was made ready,  
he catch'd her in his Arms, and carry'd her  
down stairs, bidding *Florez* look that nothing  
was left in the Chamber, which might disco-  
ver who had been there : The House that  
join'd to that in which they were, belong'd to  
a young Gentleman, whose Name was *Henri-  
quez de Velago*, an intimate Friend and Com-  
panion of *Ferdinand's*. Thither did he carry the  
disconsolate *Idalia*, entreating him to be careful  
that her Despair acted nothing against her  
Life, and that he would conceal her from the  
View of all his Servants, and at Night convey  
her to *Padua*, to a Seat he knew he had in  
that City. *Henriquez* having faithfully pro-  
mised to obey him in all these Injunctions, he  
left him, and return'd to *Florez* and the *Land-  
lady* : the latter he bade be of good comfort,  
there could be no Proof against her, and all  
she had to do was to be resolute in her Deni-  
als ; for which, he told her, he would not fail  
to recompence her. Having given this neces-  
sary Order, he went away with *Florez* at the  
Back-Door the very moment that *Bernardo*,  
and those he brought, were commanding the  
other to be opened. The Woman, according  
to Directions, immediately obey'd, and so  
well counterfeited a Surprize at the Demands  
they made, that a Person less interested than  
Don *Bernardo* would have believ'd her inno-  
cent ; but the Letter was to him an Evidence

substantial: and tho' in searching all the Rooms, examining the Servants, and taking all the Care usual on such Occasions, there seem'd not the least ground to imagine she, or any other Persons, beside the Family, had been there; he was obliged to go away more unsatisfy'd, because he wanted Proof; but as much assur'd as before, that this was the fatal Place which had deprived him of his Daughter.

*Ferdinand*, accompany'd by *Florez*, went directly to his own Apartment, where having passed some time in consultation in what manner it was best to proceed, at last it was concluded that the latter should remain there conceal'd, till they should find out by what means the Discovery had been made; and it being the Custom of the former every Morning to attend the *Doge*, he new dressed him, and at the usual Hour went to the Palace, which he found crowded by a great number of the Nobility and Senators, who, he was inform'd by some of them, were summoned by the *Doge* on an Affair relating to *Don Bernardo*. It is easy to believe his Thoughts were not a little perplexed, to find the Affair had made so great a noise; but vailing his Confusion as much as possible, he mingled with the Company that were going into the Room where his Uncle expected to receive them. The Morning-Salutations were scarce over, when the unhappy *Bernardo* entered, and made his Complaint with so moving an Air, that few that heard him, but pity'd his Misfortune. The *Doge* entreated him to be of comfort, assured him

## The Unfortunate Mistress. 27

him that nothing in the compass of his Power should be wanting for his Redress ; and that if by any means the Person who had injur'd him could be detected, the Offender, tho found in the nearest, and most dear, Relation of his own, should not be protected from the severest Punishment the Law or his Revenge requir'd. The mournful Father made his Compliment for these Assurances in as handsome a manner as his Grief would give him leave ; and having finish'd it, proceeded to relate all the Circumstances he knew of his Misfortune, which was the finding of the Letters ; one of which had so punctually nominated *that House* for the Place she was to come to : but that having been search'd, and nothing of proof to be made that she had been there, it was not impossible but some Person, to confound their Examination, might have writ it on purpose. All that remain'd was to endeavour to discover by whom these Letters were writ, for there was no Name to any of them, (*Idalia* having forbid it, that her Correspondence with *Florez* might not by any Accident be found out) *Bernardo* produced them to the View of the whole Assembly, and the *Doge* earnestly adjur'd all present, that if they could in the least guess by the Stile, or Character, who was the Author, they would immediately declare it. But every one affirm'd himself entirely ignorant, and *Ferdinand* now hugg'd himself in a full Security that this first Brunt being past, nothing could hereafter prejudice him, or *Florez*, on the account of *Idalia* : But the Solemnity with which he had heard his Uncle protest to *Don Bernardo*, that if the Person who had

had wrong'd him could by any means be discover'd, the strictest Severity of Justice should be his Portion, made him extremely cautious in what manner he behav'd. He forbore, therefore, to visit *Idalia* while she was conceal'd at the House of Don *Henriquez*, nor would for some days after he knew she was carry'd to *Padua*, go there.

BUT while the Success of this Adventure afforded a good deal of satisfactory matter of Conversation to those who were the Contrivers of it whenever they were together, the miserable *Bernardo* pass'd his Hours in a Condition pityable by all but those who had occasion'd it: he refused to eat or drink, shut himself from all Society, and suffer'd not the Light of Heaven to enter at his mournful Windows. In vain his Friends, Relations, and Acquaintance endeavour'd to persuade him to assuage his Sorrows—in vain the *Religious* of all Orders sent their daily Remonstrances, how unlawful it was to give way to such immoderate Grief! He was not to be mov'd—he was not to be comforted—and it was look'd on as almost a Miracle, that *Age* so oppress'd sunk not beneath the Burden of an Anguish sufficient to have weigh'd down Youth.

B U T to return to *Idalia*—Never Man had a Task more difficult, than *Herniquez* found in executing the Charge *Don Ferdinand* had given him. That wretched Lady was so bent on Death, that there requir'd the utmost Caution to prevent the Mischief which her Fury threaten'd: a hundred times, in that one day she

## The Unfortunate Mistress. 29

she remain'd in his House, had she attempted on her Life, and when he had put her into a *Gondula*, which he had order'd to be made ready for that purpose, he was obliged to hold her, the whole time of their little Voyage, in his Arms, or the River *Brent* had been her Grave. ‘ Oh Cruel ! Barbarous Man ! said she, why will you deny me the only Relief for Miseries like mine ? — But think not to disappoint me always — Not all the Powers of Heaven and Earth combined shall force me long to drag this Load of Infamy and Woe ! — I cannot — will not live ! ’ — With such like Speeches, which were still accompany'd with tearing of her Hair, her Garments, and sometimes her very Flesh, did she express the bitter Anguish of her Soul, whenever he attempted to divert her Desperation. But how dangerous is it for a Heart young and amorous to entertain Compassion for a Lovely Object ! What a prevailing Force has Beauty in Distress ! Not all her Distraction, nor the wild Horror which sat on her Features, could take from them their Power of Charming. — The Fire of Indignation which sparkled in her Eyes abated not the wonted Sweetness — the very Confusion of her Air had something graceful in it, and *Henriquez* too soon was sensible that in the Design of serving *Ferdinand* he had undertaken an Office fatal to his own Repose. He struggled, however, with all the force he was able, to withstand the first Emotions of his Passion, not only because of the Injustice such Sentiments would make him guilty of to a Friend who had entrusted him, but also that himself was under Obligations of

Con-

Constancy to a Lady who had prefer'd him to the whole World.

BUT alas! what Tyes, what Obligations, what Engagements are sufficient to bind the roving Heart of faithless Man? Untasted Pleasures still are thought the sweetest: Donna Laura (for so was she call'd, the Memory of whose Charms this new Beauty was beginning to erase) had already been too bounteous of her Favours to make the almost sated *Henriquez* over-solicitous of the Continuance of them; he had, however, more Gratitude than many of his Sex can boast, and, as I have already said, endeavour'd for some time very strenuously to repel the Assaults of any new Desires to her prejudice; and 'tis not altogether impossible (tho' not exceeding probable, considering the Charms of *Idalia*, and the Inconstancy which is natural to Mankind) that his Efforts might not have been unsuccessful, had not herself contributed to her undoing.

NEVER Woman was of a more Haughty, Jealous, and Impatient Disposition, than this Lady, and having sometime before made *Henriquez* a Present of a little Moorish Page, with a design to be a Spy on his Actions, was by him inform'd that his Master had order'd a Gondula to wait him about Sun-set at the River *Brent*, and that he had commanded his Servants not to discover to any Person after his Departure which way he was gone: this was sufficient to alarm her with an Apprehension that something must have occasion'd this Secrecy; and the rather, because she had sent twice that day to desire

to

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to speak with him, and he had both times excused himself from coming, pretending Indisposition. She immediately, as jealous Women do, imagin'd the worst, was certain in her own Mind that a new Mistress had engaged him from her, and that it could be with no other he intended to leave *Venice*: She presently suppos'd it must be to *Padua* he was going, and not able to linger in the Torments of Suspence, resolv'd to be there before him; and that no notice might be taken of her Design, would not command her own *Gondola*, tho she had a very fine one, to be prepared, but got into one of those common *Wherrys* which generally wait to carry ordinary Passengers. She had frequently been at the House which Don *Henriquez* had at *Padua*, and the Servants that were in it perfectly knew her, and were not at all surpriz'd to see her, especially when she told them that their Master would be there next Morning. But the Confusion with which *Henriquez* at his arrival beheld her there, may more easily be imagin'd than described; therefore I shall only say it was such as could be surmounted by nothing but the Indignation of *Laura*, when by the sight of *Idalia* with him, she had so much reason to believe her Suspicions were too just: She flew on him with all the Reproaches that her Rage, and the Confirmation of her Jealousy, could suggest; to which he gave but little Answer, till after he had conducted his Lovely Charge to a Chamber, and appointed a Servant to watch and attend her. At his Return to the Room where he had left *Laura*, he endeavour'd to allay the Fury she was in, by telling her

her part of the Truth: he assured her that it was not on his own account that he had been at the pains of bringing that Lady thither, but conceal'd the Name of the Person for whose sake he had done it; being of that opinion which most of his Sex have of the other, that there was but little Security for their Secrecy, and was sensible how dangerous for *Ferdinand* it would be, if by her Levity it should be revealed. But his evading to let her into the whole Affair, rendered her incapable of believing any part of it; all that he could say seem'd but so many Excuses, and was ineffectual to alleviate her Passion.—She loaded him with Curses and Upbraidings—swore never to see him more.—Nor could all his Entreaties prevail on her to continue a moment longer in his House; but taking advantage of the *Gondula* which had brought him and *Idalia*, left him with a Vow never to rest till she had meditated a Revenge suitable to his Perfidiousness.

WHEN once a Woman has disposed of every thing in her power to give, it must be Softness only, and fond Compliance with her Lover's Will, that can maintain her Empire o'er his Heart.—The Power which once this Lady had, was already shock'd by the newer, and more potent Charms of the incomparable *Idalia*; and the Violence of her impatient Jealousy bringing to his remembrance a thousand Faults in her Humour, which in the *Noon* of Passion's Sun were hid, but now, in the *Wane* of his Affections appear'd in their worst Colours, she began not only to appear dis-

## The Unfortunate Mistress. 33

distasteful to his softer Sentiments, but also to seem justly so to those which Reason had the greatest share in inspiring. — He knew not however to what Extremes her Indignation might transport her, and to prevent what she might contrive, thought it the best way to remove *Idalia*. He had a little *Villa* at *Vicenza*, about a Day's Journey from *Padua*, in the Road to *Verona*, one of the most pleasantly situated Places in all *Italy*, having its Foundation on a Hill, which afforded a Prospect of the whole Country round for many Miles; the Sweetness of the Air, and the Variety of rural Diversions she might find there, he hoped might have an influence over her Melancholy, and in time wear off the Bitterness of those agonizing Reflections which at present she was so full of.

HE delay'd the Execution of this Design no longer than the next Day; and as nothing violent is ever of any long continuance, thro' his Persuasions, and the Measures he made use of to effect it, the desperate Emotions which had raged with so much Fury in the Soul of *Idalia*, began by little and little to abate; and the wonderful Respect, and prodigious Tenderness with which she found herself treated by this new Adorer, by degrees entirely reconciled her to Life! He observ'd it with Joy, and being desirous to discover more, one Day, as they were sitting together, he entreated her to command him something whereby he might testify the sincere Esteem and Admiration he professed to have for her. — He assured her there was nothing so difficult that he would

not undertake for her sake, and to sound her Inclinations, begg'd she would have confidence enough in him to acquaint him with what she would have done.— ‘ Do not,’ Madam, said he, consider yourself as under any Restraint, while at *Vicenza*: tho’ nothing in the World can afford me a Joy adequate to that of gazing on you, yet if you are determined to return to your Father, myself shall conduct you to him, and endeavour to invent some Excuse which may shadow over the true Cause of your Absence — or if you can enough forgive the Faults of raging Passion, to yield to the Affections of *Don Ferdinand*, tho’ to the eternal Ruin of my own ardent Wishes, at *Padua* you shall meet him; for doubtless he will soon be there to take you from me — or if there be any thing in this place so agreeable to you, as to make you willing to blets me with your Residence in it, here remain safe both from your Father’s Power, and the Sollicitations of all you would avoid.’ This Offer appear’d so generous, that *Idalia* was infinitely charm’d with it; and, after a little pause, ‘ I am so much obliged, rep’d he, to your Honour and Good-Nature, since I have been here, that it is not without the utmost Confusion I reflect on my manner of treating you when I was first put in your power: as you had no hand in my Undoing, I ought to have reserved my Reproaches for those who alone are worthy of em.— And to the rest of your Obligations I see you are willing to add that of pardoning what my Madnes uttered: But, continued

## The Unfortunate Mistress. 35

See, with an Air wholly composed of Sweetness,  
for this last Favour I know not with what  
Words to thank you — there's something  
in it beyond the reach of Gratitude —  
and 'tis in my Acceptance only that I can  
prove how truly I am touch'd with it. —  
To return to *Venice* I never can consent,  
my Reputation blasted, and ruin'd by my  
Father's hasty Zeal in publishing this Ad-  
venture, I should become the Jeſt of every  
ſawcy Girl that envy'd me before. — My  
Spirit could not bear it. — No, first I'd  
turn a wretched Wandeſter thro' the pityleſſ  
World — a Grave would now be prefera-  
ble to my Father's House. — But as to  
*Ferdinand!* — the Villain! — the Mon-  
ſter that has undone me! — Hell, Hell,  
is not ſo dreadful as the Thoughts of ſeeing  
him again! — Then, Madam, cry'd  
*the transported Henriquez*, interrupting her, I  
may hope you will continue here? — For  
ſome time, refuſed ſhe, if you grow not wea-  
ry of ſo troubleſome a Guest: I'll ſtay till  
I have diſpoſed of myſelf either in a Mo-  
naſtery, or ſome other Place. — 'Tis eaſy  
to ſuppoſe with how much Rapture the ena-  
mou'red *Henriquez* heard her ſpeak theſe words:  
There paſſed between 'em ſeveral Protestations  
of Love and Adoration on the one ſide, and  
Esteem and Gratitude on the other; and at  
laſt entring into a Diſcourse what Method was  
moſt proper to make uſe of for the preſeruing  
her in that Liberty ſhe deſired, they both  
thought it beſt that he ſhould leave her there,  
and return to *Padua* before the coming of *Fer-  
dinand*, and miſſing him, ſhould diſcover he  
had

had carry'd her to any other Place ; and that at their first meeting, he should counterfeit the greatest Concern imaginable for not having been able to discharge the Trust reposed in him ; and withal, dress up a Story of her having made her escape by Night from his House. This being concluded on, he took Horse immediately for Padua, where had happened a Disturbance he little expected to hear of.

THE malicious Lawra, doubly disappointed in her Love and Pride, meditated nothing but Revenge ; and tho' she had never seen *Idalia* before she met her at *Henriquez's* House, nor could be certain she was that Lady whose Elopement had made so great a noise at *Venice*, yet it came into her head to report it ; not doubting but *Don Bernardo* would take such measures to assure himself, as would infallibly expose her Rival. She thought that if it were really *Idalia*, as there was nothing improbable but it should, the Father's just Indignation would not only be the Ruin of his Passion, by depriving him of her sight for ever, but also the eternal Destruction of his Fortune, and perhaps his Life, for there was not any thing too violent for her Rage to wish inflicted on him : and that if it should happen to be any other Woman, the Discovery who she was, and the Opportunity it would give of blasting her Reputation, would be some little Satisfaction, for the Loss of *Henriquez*. With this View she took a Pen, and employ'd it to *Don Bernardo*, in the manner following.

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### To Don BERNARDO.

**T**O receive an Injury, yet to be, by our Ignorance of the Person who offers it, deprived of the means either of Vengeance or Redress, I look upon as a Vexation almost equal to what the Misfortune itself occasions: and have too great a Sense of what a Father's Heart must feel in a Disappointment like yours, to withhold a Secret which may afford some Sort of a Satisfaction to you.

THE fair Idalia, your unhappy Daughter, either too fatally ensnared by the Insinuations of the most Vicious and Perfidious of his Sex Don Henriquez de Velago, or betray'd to his Power by some Artifice yet more base, was lodg'd in his House, perhaps in his Bed, when you were vainly searching for her in another place: But he, with reason, fearing the amorous Theft unsafe to be long detain'd at Venice, has since carry'd her to Padua, where he now revels in her Ruin, and triumphs in Security.

**I**WOULD be but impertinent to instruct you what to do; your own Wisdom and Paternal Care will need no Admonitions with what expedition you should haste, I will not say to save, but to revenge a Daughter: Therefore will trouble you no farther than to entreat your pardon for not setting any Name to this Advertisement, which is design'd a friendly one, from

Your unknown Humble Servant.

A

A Reader of the most ordinary Capacity will easily imagine this Letter had the effect on Don *Bernardo* it was writ for; he forgot his Age, and the Indisposition his late Griefs had thrown him in; he defer'd going to *Padua* no longer a time than the Necessity of getting those People who were to accompany him requir'd: But this unhappy Gentleman had to his other Calamity this added, of being twice as he believ'd at the point of detecting the Author of his Misfortune, and as often finding his Expectations disappointed; for the Servants of *Henriquez*, were all of them too faithful to utter the least Syllable of what they knew; and *Bernardo* doubted not but he had been a second time abused, and presently imagin'd the Person who had writ the other Letter to amuse his Search, had also been the Contriver of this.

BUT tho' there was nothing of *Idalia* to be heard, this Adventure was the Occasion of bringing to light another Secret; which afterward being blaz'd abroad, was matter enough of discourse for the whole Town for a long time. Having left *Henriquez's* House with a design never to trouble any other without some more evident Demonstration that they were not imposed on, as they pass'd by a Vineyard adjoining to it, they happen'd to see a Country Fellow pruning the Vines; it came into the head of some one of those who were with *Bernardo*, to inquire of him if he had not seen a Lady at his Master's. The Rustick's Simplicity gave hopes he would not deny the Truth,

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Truth, or if he did, it would be in such a manner, as they might easily discover it; and indeed had a Secret been in his keeping, there was little probability it would long continue so. He presently told them, a Lady had been there some few days before; and, said he, 'tis rumour'd here at *Padua*, that she is *Don Henriquez's* Mistress.—Some say that he is to marry her, but by the Mass I believe nothing of it; for changing to be in the *Grove* behind the House, who did I see come in but these two kissing and toying; they did not think I took any notice—I say no more; but if ever he is her Husband, I have lost my aim—that's all.—These Words, which could not be imagin'd to be utter'd with any other design than what the manner of them express'd, the Pleasure some People, especially of his degree, take in speaking all they know, made poor *Bernardo* ready to sink into the Earth: he was now sure it was *Idalia* that the Fellow meant, and the Horror which seiz'd his before half-broken Heart, was now so great to hear this seeming Confirmation of the Dishonour of his Family and Ruin of his Child, that he had neither Voice or Spirit to ask more. But the others, being less interested in what they heard, had Presence of Mind enough to put many other Questions to him; among the rest, what sort of a Woman she was who had been so familiar with *Don Henriquez*, if she was tall or short, black or fair, of what Age she appear'd to be, and if he had ever seen her before, or knew of her having been at his Master's House any other time than that he spoke of in the *Grotto*: to most of these Interrogatories

rogatories the Fellow made such Replies as gave no Certainty whether it was the Lady they were in search of or not ; till to the last, that of how often she had been there, he told them it had been her constant Custom to come and tarry two or three Nights at a time, whenever *Henriquez* was at *Padua*, as long as he had been employ'd in working there, which had been above two Years. This Account did no way agree with a Belief that it could be *Idalia*, who had never been one Night absent from her Father's House till that fatal one, in which he had begun his Search : which some of 'em saying, and chancing to mention her Name — ‘ Alas ! cry'd the Countryman, you are mistaken, Gentlemen, I do not know any thing of the Woman you speak of ; she I mean, is call'd *Donna Laura de Savila*, Widow of *Don Jaquer de Savila*, I was once a Servant of her Husband's, and am as well acquainted with her Face as my own'd. There was not a Person in this Company but knew this Lady, but there was one among 'em whom these Words did more particularly influence ; he had for a long time had a Passion for her, and finding all the Endeavours he could make use of were in vain to engage any other Return than Disdain, his slighted Tenderness (as 'tis common enough, especially among the Indians) was now converted to as violent an Aversion, and nothing on earth could have been so agreeable to the Sentiments with which he now consider'd her, as this Account, which gave him so fair an opportunity of affronting, and exposing her ; which at their Return to *Venice* he took care

## The Unfortunate Mistress. 41

to do, with such a witty Inveteracy, that the once haughty, gay, admired *Laura* saw herself in a little time the Ridicule of all who knew her; and not able to endure the Disrespect of those Reflections which even her very Presence did not silence, and as little in a Capacity of revenging it, her Charms being almost past the Bloom, and her Wealth, by former Extravagancies very near exhausted, out of humour with the World, and detesting all Mankind, she retired to a Relation's House which few resorted to, who had any knowledge of her, and indulg'd her Discontent that a Misfortune she design'd another, had so justly fallen on herself.

BUT this happen'd not till after she had seen one part of her indignant Wish fulfill'd, the Death of *Henriquez*; which tho' not brought about by any Contrivance of her own, she look'd upon as inflicted on him by the Justice of Providence for his Ingratitude and Perfidiousness to her.

AT his Return to *Padua*, 'tis hard to say whether his Surprize to hear his House had been search'd, or the Joy he conceiv'd that the Danger of it was so well over, had the greatest share in his Soul; but his Contentment was only of a short continuance, designing to go immediately to *Venice*, thinking it the more effectual way to take off all Apprehensions of Don Ferdinand's ever expecting to find *Idalia* with him, to go to him with the Story he had form'd of her Escape, than to wait his coming to seek her at *Padua*. He was

just preparing to set out, when he was told  
that Don Ferdinand was alighted at the Gate :  
he went to receive him with the Familiarity  
which the long Friendship that had been be-  
tween them render'd the most obliging ; but  
before he had time to mention what he in-  
tended about *Idalia*, the other was beginning  
to make him a thousand Acknowledgments for  
the Care he had taken in preserving her for  
him. ‘ To what an infinite degree, dear  
Friend, said he, am I obliged to you for the  
trouble you have had in securing for me a  
Happiness I must but for your Goodness  
have been utterly deprived of ! All that I  
can say, will be too little to express the  
Gratitude I feel—but be assured the Favour  
shall never die in my Remembrance ; each  
moment that blesses me with my lov'd *Ida-*  
*lia's* sight, will also remind me it is to you  
I am indebted for the Rapture.’—‘ Alas !  
my Lord, (interrupted Henriquez, a little con-  
founded at receiving *Thanks* for that which he was  
conscious to himself he was far from deserving) I  
wish to Heaven it had been in my power to  
have any way contributed to your Satis-  
faction, but all my Endeavours were in  
vain’—‘ I know what you would say,  
(cry'd Ferdinand, not suffering him to proceed)  
I know the Inexorable Fair has been deaf to  
all the Arguments you could urge in favour  
of my Passion ; but no matter, Time and  
Affiduity may work upon her, and my con-  
tinued Tenderness engage her yielding to  
that Joy the Violence of my burning Passion  
has yet but by Force obtained.—But haste,  
pursued he, my dear Henriquez ! haste and  
conduct

## The Unfortunate Mistress. 43

conduct me to her—my throbbing Heart  
beats high with raging Love.—This tedious  
Absence which the Fear of being suspected,  
and by that means losing her for ever, could  
only have occasion'd, has made me almost  
wild with fierce Impatience—I burn, I bleed,  
I die to see her.—Can it be possible,  
*resumed Henriquez coldly*, this mighty Long-  
ing, this ardent Wishing for one whose  
Charms already you have rifled? Can the  
Desire of Beauty enjoy'd and known, afford  
such eager Transports?—Tis strange  
indeed, *reply'd Ferdinand*, but would not  
seem so, could you have any Notion how  
much beyond her Sex *Idalia* is—how charm-  
ing even in the midst of Rage and Grief—  
Her very Frowns have more Attractions in  
'em than the most melting Softness of any  
other Woman!—I am sorry for it, *said*  
*Henriquez*, and if Wishes would avail, could  
willingly lose part of my Blood, she seem'd  
less worthy your Esteem.

THE Surprise of the enamour'd *Ferdinand*  
at these words can hardly be represented,  
much less the Rage with which he listen'd to  
that Story the other had prepared to deceive  
him into a Belief of her Flight. There is no-  
thing in the world more difficult than to con-  
ceal Love from him who is a *Lover*, but much  
more so, when the same Object enflames them  
both: Besides, there are so many little Hes-  
itations in the telling an Untruth, especially  
with those who do not usually practise it, that  
a nice Observer may easily discern the dif-  
ference. Don *Ferdinand* was too passionate an

Admirer of *Idalia's* Perfections, not to believe it highly probable another might think of her as he did ; and, by the Force he had made use of to gratify his Desires, one might know he was not so great a Bigot to the Rules of Honour, as to imagine they had power to restrain Appetite : He forbore, however, to interrupt the other while he was speaking ; but as soon as he found him silent, he broke out into all the Exclamations the Falshood he believed himself treated with deserved. *Henriquez* willing to preserve his Friendship, but resolute not to forgo *Idalia*, made a thousand Imprecations to aver the Truth of what he said, but to no purpose ; and had it really happen'd as *Henriquez* pretended, 'tis probable he would have found it a hard matter to have gain'd credit from this impatient Lover : Fierce and tempestuous in his Nature when any thing displeased him, he let him know he saw through, and disdain'd, the feeble Arts with which he went about to impose on him, and bid him once for all bring forth *Idalia*, or answer his Demand with his Sword. *Henriquez* would very fain have evaded either, but finding himself press'd past refusal, and absolutely bent not to comply with the former, he was obliged to do so to the latter, or prove himself a Coward : the Place agreed on for the Decision of this fatal Controversy, was a Field adjoining to *Henriquez's* House ; and *Ferdinand* going there before, to avoid Suspicion of their Quarrel, the other promised to follow him immediately.

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IT was not without the greatest Concern that *Henriquez* found himself involv'd in this unhappy Necessity, either to be miserable for ever in the Loss of *Idalia*, or become the Enemy of a Person whom he had long consider'd as the most intimate of his Friends, and one in whose power it was to do him many ill Offices with the *Doge*; on whom he, as well as the other, had a Dependance. But what Considerations are of force against Love? After two or three moments Reflection, he sat him down, and writ a Letter, which he gave to a trusty Servant, ordering him to carry it with all Secrecy and Speed to his *Villa* at *Vicenza*, and deliver it to *Idalia*; and then immediately went to the Field, where the enraged *Ferdinand* impatiently expected him.

A few words, much to the same purpose as those they had entertain'd each other with in the House, having past between them, the new-made Enemies drew their Swords, and running against each other with greater Force than Art, each more aiming to reach his Rival's Life than defend his own, both had their Wish; the unfortunate *Henriquez* lost his at the first Push, and his Antagonist having receiv'd his Death's Wound, though yet ignorant of it, seeing him fall, was about to make his Escape, when, on a sudden, he found himself unable, and that he should soon lose both the Triumph of having overcome his Foe, and the Danger of the Punishment the Law inflicts on Duellists. He surviv'd not the other above half an hour, as the Chirurgeons, who afterwards examin'd

amin'd the Bodies, imagin'd; and the untimely Death of these two unhappy Gentlemen gave *Idalia* the first Proof, that her Beauty, like a fatal Comet, was destructive to all on whom it had any Influence, and seem'd given her in so extraordinary a Proportion, only to make her Misfortunes more conspicuous.

SHE, who little dreamt of this fatal Catastrophe, was, in the mean time, entertaining herself with Ideas of a far different nature: had she been less conscious of her own Excellencies, she could not have been blind to the Admiration which every Word and Action testify'd Don *Henriquez* had of them. She saw plainly that he lov'd her, and lov'd her with a Passion which was not to be accounted less violent, because it was more respectful than that of Don *Ferdinand*; her Pride however would certainly have prefer'd the latter, because of his superior Quality, could she have entertain'd the least hope, that after what had happened he would marry her. But young and vain as she was, she flatter'd not herself with such a hope; and for that reason, as well as for the Violence he had used her with, he was the Object of her extremest Detestation: but as for *Henriquez*, she began to consider, that if his Designs were honourable, as he had never given her any Cause to suspect they were not, she might, by becoming his Wife, take off the Odium, which, by her being gone from her Father's House, had been cast on her Reputation. And this appear'd so laudable a Wish, that she thought it would be an Indiscretion greater than any she had yet been

## The Unfortunate Mistress. 47

been guilty of, should she refuse it? She thought of nothing therefore but the manner in which she should consent, which she doubted not but he would ask at his next Coming to Vicensa.

I doubt not but the Reader will be pretty much surpriz'd to find she could so easily be brought from one Extreme to another; and that she who but a few days before was all Despair and Rage, was already grown so temperate and calm; but there was a happy Instability in this Lady's Nature, which prevented her from regretting any thing for a long time together; and it was this Disposition which carry'd her thro a Sea of innumerable Troubles, each of which would have been sufficient to have overwhelm'd another Woman. The Treachery with which her Confidence had been abus'd by *Flores*, the irreparable Injury her Virtue had received from the brutal Passion of *Ferdinand*, and the Grief which she was sensible the Loss of her was to her afflicted Father, were now no more remembred, or consider'd only as Vexations which the gaining a Husband so meritorious as *Henriquez* would amply compensate.

IN Contemplations therefore, not displeasing, did she pass her Time; till about the third Day after the Departure of *Henriquez*, one of the Servants whom he had left to attend her, came running hastily into the Room where she was, and told her, That Don *Myrtano*, Brother to his Master, desir'd to speak with her. She cou'd have no Apprehensions of the true Reason of this Visit, and imagining only that

that some Accident having detain'd Henriquez longer than he design'd, he had commission'd him to tell her of it, went to receive him without any Concern, or Boding of the Miseries, which this fatal Interview drew on her.

AFTER the first Civilities were over, Madam ! said he, I have a Letter for you, which you ought to have receiv'd before ; but the same unhappy Accident which delay'd the bringing it, has also been the Cause of my breaking it open ; a Rudeness, I confess, which nothing but the Occasion could excuse. In speaking these Words, he deliver'd a Paper to her, which was the same that Henriquez had writ to her the moment before he fought with Ferdinand. The melancholy Air of his Deportment, and the Sighs which accompany'd his Expressions, gave her sufficient Reason to believe there was something extraordinary to be told her ; but she suspended the lesser Curiosity, to satisfy the greater, of knowing what this Letter contain'd ; which opening hastily, she found in it these Lines :

### To the Incomparable IDALIA.

*I*F any thing were wanting to make my Charmer sensible of the Wanders of her Power, and the Effects it has wrought on me ; what I am now about to acquaint her, with would be a Proof.

*D*ON Ferdinand either suspecting the Artifice which my Passion inspir'd me to deceive him with, or resenting the little Care I seem'd to have of the Party.

Trust

## The Unfortunate Mistress. 49

Trust he repos'd in me, demands my Life for the Expiation of my Crime. I go this Moment to answer the Call of his Revenge. I cannot blame him; the Man who aims at so inestimable a Treasure as Your Love, should, for that Blessing, quit all meaner Considerations: and in that View only it is that I shall dare to maintain the Falsity I have told him, tho' at the Expence of my last Drop of Blood. But, as I am ignorant how, in this fatal Contest, Fate may deal with me, I snatch this Opportunity of pouring out a Million of soft, tender Wishes, while I give you this Assurance, that whatever is decreed for my Body, you wholly govern my Immortal Part; the Sword of Ferdinand may pierce my Heart, but not erase the bright Idea that my Soul is full of: when I am Ashes, the Passion you have inspir'd will have a Being; and Living, or Dying, I shall still continue

Your Adorer,

Henriquez De Velago.

IDALIA was too much interested in the Life of Don Henriquez, not to be impatient to hear the Issue of this Quarrel mention'd in the Letter; which being inform'd of by his Brother, she swoon'd away, o'ercome with Grief and Wonder. Don Myrtano was not idle in applying proper Means for her Recovery, which when he had effected, he began to entertain her in a very different manner than what she cou'd have expected from so near a Relation to the Man who owed his Death to her malevolent Beauty; he was all Complaisance, all Gallantry, and seem'd so little astonish'd at what his Brother

H had

had done, that he assur'd her he should think a Death so caus'd more glorious than the longest Life, which gave not a Proof of being sensible of her Charms : This was indeed the Way to dissipate her Sorrows, but as she wanted not Wit nor Discernment, tho' her Vanity too often blinded her Judgment, she could not help thinking it a little odd that he should come there to visit her, and bring a Letter which he confessed he had taken the Liberty to open ; and letting fall some Words which testify'd as much, he gave her to understand his Reasons for it, in this manner. ' I see, Madam, said he, that you are not more surpriz'd at the Contents of this Letter, than that I am the Bearer of it ; and because I should think it a Sin unpardonable to Heaven to oppose the Will of its most perfect Resemblance, the Divine *Idalia*, I shall endeavour to satisfy her, as far as is in my power, of every Particular of this unfortunate Adventure. Happening to be walking with your Father Don *Bernardo* on the Parade the very Morning that he received a Letter from an unknown Hand, which gave him an Account of my Brother being blest with your Society, he desir'd me with the most earnest Conjurations to inform him what I knew of the Affair ; to which I answer'd, as well I might, that I was so far from being let into any such Secret, that I verily believ'd it a Falsity ; and when he spoke of coming to *Padua* in search of you, I offer'd to accompany him, which I had done if not prevented by some Busines which I could not put off. At his Return he sent for me, and seem'd concern'd that he had been guilty of

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of wronging my Brother, and entreated me  
to make his Apology when next I saw him,  
which I told him would be in a short Time,  
and accordingly took Horse for Padua imme-  
diately. I alighted there at the very moment  
that the Bodies of the two unhappy Rivals  
were brought in: The Consternation I was  
in, to see this dreadful Issue of a Friendship  
which promis'd a far different Consequence,  
can hardly be express'd: I stood for some  
time without the Power of Speech or Motion,  
and perhaps had not recover'd myself so soon,  
if a Servant whom I knew to be the most fa-  
vour'd one my Brother kept, had not rouz'd  
me from my Lethargy of Thought, by giving  
me a Paper, which he told me was writ by  
his Master, and put into his Hand, with a  
strict Charge to be deliver'd to a Lady at  
*Vicenza*. I was just about to carry it, said he,  
but am glad I made no greater haste, since  
the Contents may possibly inform you the  
Reasons of this fatal Quarrel. In that per-  
plexity of Mind, I lost Decorum, and break-  
ing the Seal, soon found the Fellow's Con-  
jecture but too true,—that it was to *Love* I  
owed the Misfortune of my Brother's Death:  
Wonder not then, adorable *Idalia!* (continu'd  
he, soft'ning his Voice) that I was fir'd with  
Impatience to behold a Beauty, whose  
Charms had given such a Proof of their pro-  
digious Influence.—I come (cry'd he, growing  
more tender) to satisfy a Curiosity which, I  
fear, will cost me dear.' There was some-  
thing so very graceful and engaging, in the Air  
and Address of this young Gentleman, that it  
was almost impossible to see or hear him, with-

out confessing a Sensibility of Perfections which very few, if any, cou'd equal. *Idalia*, who had a Soul too capable of soft Impressions, full of warm Desires, and tender Languishments, tho' yet unfix'd, gaz'd on him with a Pleasure which as yet she knew not the Meaning of.—That Life and Gayety which once had made her relish the Conversation of *Florez*—that noble Mein and elegant Behaviour which had engag'd her Attention to the first Vows of *Ferdinand*—and that submissive Tenderness which pleas'd her in the Addresses of *Henriquez*, and a thousand other different, nameless Graces, which seem'd united in the lovely *Myrtano*, inspir'd her, at the first Sight of him, with a Passion which she had neither Strength to repel, nor Artifice to conceal.—She now found in good Earnest what it was to love, and felt in reality those Emotions which before she but fancy'd to have done. He who was perfectly acquainted with the Sex, and no Stranger to the Charms he had for 'em, immediately read it in her Eyes, and resolv'd to make his Advantage of it, in favour of those Desires, which few that saw *Idalia* but were possest with.

HE staid not long at the *Villa*, after having entreated her to remain there his Guest, as she had been his Brother's, and to command every thing in it with the same Freedom as she wou'd do at *Don Bernardi's*; the necessary Preparations for the Funeral of *Henriquez*, whose Heir he was, obliging him to return to *Padua* with all expedition: but the short Time he had been there, was sufficient to inspire the unhappy

*Idalia*

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*Idalia* with such Sentiments as severely reveng'd  
the Destruction of his Brother.

THE Infancy of Love is generally the most  
pleasing Part of it, when new Desires play  
round the innocent Heart, and gentle Thril-  
lings warm the throbbing Veins, the ten-  
der Passion by swift but unperceiv'd degrees  
stealing thro' all the Seats of Life, affords  
only gay Wishes, pleasing Dreams, and rap-  
turous Images of Joys to come; but in another  
manner did it enter the Soul of this unquiet  
Fair—She no sooner found herself alone, than  
giving way to her impatient Passion, a thou-  
sand widely different Thoughts, all wild and  
stormy as a troubled Sea, overwhelmed Reflec-  
tion, and made Reason giddy—She was pre-  
sently sensible that she lov'd, and lov'd to that  
prodigious height, that the least Appearance  
of an Obstacle to what she wish'd, was worse  
than Death; her ruin'd Honour, and her  
blacken'd Fame seem'd now Misfortunes more  
terrible by far than ever they had done before.

‘ Oh ’tis impossible (*cry’d she to herself*) that  
‘ Myrtano the lovely, the accomplish’d Myrtano,  
‘ can ever think the undone *Idalia* an Object  
‘ worthy of his serious Affections.—No, ’twas  
‘ all Gallantry—all unmeaning Flattery which  
‘ dictated the tender Words he spoke.—His  
‘ Heart despises the Indiscretion of my Con-  
‘ duct.—Pity is the most tender Sentiment he  
‘ can regard me with,—and oh! how distant is  
‘ that from what I would inspire!’ A Stream  
of Tears succeeded these Expressions; but this  
Passion having a little vented itself, the natural  
Vanity of her Disposition return’d to give her  
Consola-

Consolation; and in this Humour she would say, ‘ Yet why should I despair,—I am perhaps the only Person that judges with so much Severity of my Actions. *Henriquez* found enough in me to counterbalance all that my Mismanagement has brought upon me, and why may I not hope his Brother may be of his Opinion? — My Eyes are still the same, and every Charm which us’d to attract, maintains its Lustre with unfading Brightness.— The Man to whom I ow’d my Shame, has with his Life repair’d the Injury he did me, —nor is my Birth unworthy of *Myrtano*.’ With such kind of Sentiments would she awhile beguile Despair; but then the excessive Eagerness with which she wish’d to appear amiable in the Eyes of this Charmer of her Soul, suggested another Difficulty which she knew not how to get over.— ‘ Fool that I am, (*resumed she*) and too liable to entertain the vain Delusions of fictitious Hope.— ’Tis not in Nature—’tis not in Reason, to expect the Man whose Brother I have kill’d, should love me.—The noble *Henriquez*, but for me, might have liv’d long and happily—for my curs’d sake he dy’d, and *Myrtano* is bound to hate me—should he forgive it, the Ghost of that unhappy Youth, would rise to blast us in the midst of Rapture—O Torture! Horror! Hell!—it cannot—must not be—both Heaven and Earth forbid it—*Henriquez* cannot be recall’d, and *Myrtano* must not love.

IN Agonies not to be express’d, not to be conceived but by the Heart that felt’em, did this half-distracted Lady pass the Night after

the

## *The Unfortunate Mistress.* 55

the departure of *Myrtano*; but the Morning brought her a Comforter beyond her Hopes. She was scarce risen from the Bed, which the Confusion of her Thoughts had made most restless, when she received a Letter, which opening with a mixture of Delight and Pain, as believing it came from him who now had the sole Power of bestowing either, she read these Lines :

### *To the Never-enough-Admir'd*

#### *IDALIA.*

*I*T is not the bleeding Body of my only Brother yet uninterr'd, it is not the Apprehensions how, at so unfit a Season, you may condemn my rash Proceeding, can deter me from making a Declaration as suitable to your Beauty, as it is the contrary to my present Circumstance. But you were created only to work Wonders, and in the midst of Death and Horror disclose an opening Heaven, whose Brightness will suffer no other Ideas but itself to appear in the Remembrance.

*THE Curiosity which yesterday brought me to Vicensa, has involv'd me in a Passion which must render me either the most blest, or the most wretched of Mankind. Who loves Idalia can have no Medium in his Fate; what then must be the Terrors of Suspence in an Affair on which depends far more than Life? Ease them, I conjure you, most adorable Idalia! and either send me to the Grave*

Grave with my unhappy Brother, or permit me to live in the felicitous Hope of being one day  
rescued from the power of death, & to be admitted into your presence. Yours,  
Myrtano de Velago.

P.S. Whether you pardon or condemn the Presumption of this, let a Line inform me: if the former, expect me to return Thanks at your feet, as soon as the Obsequies of my Brother are perform'd; if the latter, to bear I am no more.

## A L I A D I

WITH what Transports of unbounded Joy she read these Words, let those be judge who love like her: a thousand, thousand, times she kiss'd the dear, the welcome, Mandate; then put it to her Heart, repeating to herself the ravishing Contents—then snatch'd it out again, as loth to lose the sight of what had given her so infinite a Satisfaction, that scarce the Author of it, had he been present, could have added to it; the Ecstasy so fill'd her Soul, that she thought not of answering it, till a Servant inform'd her the Messenger, who brought it, waited to be dispatch'd. He shall not long, (cry'd she, starting as it were from some delightful Dream) and immediately running to a Table, whereon stood a Standish, made him this Reply:

To

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### To Don MYRTANO.

IN what manner can a Person so much obliged receive an Overture of Love, without appearing guilty either of an Indecorum to herself, or Ingratitude to you? If I accept too readily of the Heart you offer, how shall I answer it to the Modesty of my Sex? And if I reject it, what way is left for me to repay the many Favours I am indebted for?—Severe Necessity! that whichsoever Path I tread, it leads to Condemnation——yet such is the Cruelty of my Fate. I therefore will chuse neither, but remain unbyass'd till Time, and a more perfect Acquaintance with your Humour, shall inform me what will best become Bernardo's Daughter.

Idalia.

P. S. While I am a welcome Guest at Vicenza, I shall expect you to tell me so, as frequently as you can.

IT was with all the difficulty in the world she restrain'd herself from writing with more Tenderness, and when she read over what she was about to send, it appear'd so cold, and so far unlike the sincere Dictates of her Wishes, that she could not forbear adding a Postscript, for fear he should imagine her, indeed, altogether insensible of his Merit, and give over the hopeless Prosecution: nor was she reconciled to what she had done, till the next Morning, much about the same Hour

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she had received the former, she was agreeably disturb'd from her Sleep by a second *Billet*, the Contents of which were these :

### To the Adorable IDALIA.

THE Sight of your dear Hand gave a Joy too exquisite to be allay'd, even by the cold Reluctance with which you seem to treat a Passion the sincerest that ever Man profess'd or Woman welcom'd. — Methinks there should need no more to convince you of the Power of your triumphant Charms, than two such Victims as Ferdinand and Henriquez ; and whenever you doubt my Truth, it cannot be that you call in question your own Beauty, but my Incapacity of distinguishing it.— But Time (as you are pleased to say) as it will convince you, so I hope will also move you to compassionate what is felt by

Your most Faithful Slave,

Myrtano de Velago.

P. S. The Body of the unfortunate Henriquez is this Night to be reposed in the Tomb of his Ancestors, and I hope to-morrow's Evening will bring me to Vicenza.— Prepare, if possible, to receive me with a Smile, lest I envy the Condition of him I leave behind me, and regret a Life made miserable by your Displeasure.

THERE was not abundance of occasion for this Pressure in the Postscript ; the enamour'd

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mour'd Idalia would have found it a difficult task to have dress'd her Face in Frowns whenever he appear'd, had she never so much endeavour'd it; and she was so much an Enemy to disguising her Sentiments, that he might easily read them in the Answer which she return'd. It was in this manner.

### To Don MYRTANO.

*If I were not unwilling to harbour a Thought so entirely disagreeable to my own Desires, I should imagine there was more of Raillery than Sincerity in the Declaration your first Letter made me. I am not so little conscious of my own Demerits, as to believe myself capable of inspiring a Passion such as you describe—but I shall make allowances for that. I am sensible you Men of Wit know how to magnify—and if I have not the better opinion of the small share of Beauty I am mistress of, I shall most certainly of your Elegance in raising an Idea so infinitely beyond what it is in reality.—All I wish is, that in good earnest you may talk yourself into an Imposition on your Judgment, and never see more than now you seem to do, the Faults of*

Idalia.

P. S. I shall impatiently expect you to-morrow at Vicenza, and shall take care not to wear a Countenance too melancholy, lest it should remind you (more than will be for my advantage) of our common Loss in the Generous Henriquez.—Till then—Adieu.

IN Contemplations much the same as she had entertain'd herself with the Night before, did she pass this. The ensuing Day slid on insensibly, while she was employ'd in studying Airs, and practising in her Glass new Graces, to make the already charm'd *Myrtano* more enflamed. At length he came, and whether the extraordinary Desire each had to please, or that (as most People at some times look more amiable than at others) that day they chanced to do so; but the before too potent Charms of both, seem'd improv'd at this second View. The sparkling Eyes of *Myrtano*, which before shone with Amazement, at the uncommon Beauties they beheld in *Idalia's*, had now a tender Languor—a swimming Ecstasy—a soft, beseeching, nameless, Loveliness, mix'd with their Lustre, and spake, without the help of Words, the Wishes of his Soul. The Mourning Dress he had on, set off to vast advantage the Delicacy of his Complexion, which was of so unmatch'd a Whiteness, that there required all that Majesty, and Loveliness of Mien, which in his whole Deportment show'd itself, to keep him from Effemiancy: and, indeed, never did Nature unite such contrary Perfections with so engaging a Harmony as in his Composition. A distant View show'd him all *Hero*, adorn'd with every manly Martial Grace, and inspired Awe in the admiring Gazer; but his near Approach dissolv'd in softning Languishments the Soul, and spoke him form'd for all the Joys of Love. Thus, but far more enchanting than Description can have power to represent him, did he appear

## *The Unfortunate Mistress.* 61

appear to the transported *Idalia*; but that the Reader may have some little Notion of his Charms, take the Idea of 'em set down by her who best knew how to paint them.

## *The Character of MYRTANO;*

Writ by *IDALIA,*

*And found afterwards in her Closet.*

**B**Right! Lovely! Graceful! are all Words below  
What to Myrtano's Character we owe:  
Divinely Glorious! Godlike! speaks but Part,  
He yet has Charms which nearer touch the Heart:  
These, awful Wonder, and our Homage claim,  
But there's a Sweetness Language cannot name,  
A Soul-Enchanting Softness (far above  
The reach of Thought, unknowing him, to prove)  
Dwells in his Air, amidst his Glories plays,  
And tempers, not diminishes the Blaze.

**H**ERE Fancy stoops to court the Aid of Sense,  
Unable to conceive such Excellence!  
Imagination may a Form create,  
Correctly Lovely, and supremely Great;  
But Oh! how mean would that Idea be,  
To what, indeed, is to be found in Thee!  
Joy-mingled Wonder kindles at thy sight,  
And clothes our Admiration with Delight!

AS

*As Tapers languish at th' Approach of Day,*  
*And by degrees melt slow their Shine away ;*  
*A while they glimmer with contracted Spires,*  
*Trembling, unable to relax their Fires :*  
*But when the Sun's broad Eye is open'd wide,*  
*And Beams, thick flashing, shoot on every side,*  
*No more their emulative Force they try,*  
*But quite o'erwhelm'd with Radiance sink, and die ;*  
*So those pale Lights whose Glare late shar'd our*  
*Praise,*  
*Are wholly lost in thy Almighty Blaze.*  
*Eras'd and blotted from the Book of Fame,*  
*Her thousand Tongues swell with thy charmful Name :*  
*No other Sound now strikes our ravish'd Ears !*  
*No other Form in our glad View appears !*  
*So fully o'er the Soul thy Influence reigns,*  
*That not one Rebel Thought thy Sway disdains.*

HAD the Lover of *Idalia* been as poetically inclined, 'tis possible we might have had a better Description of her transmitted to Posterity, than I am able to gather from the imperfect Accounts I received from those who gave me the History of her Life : but since that has not been done, every body is at liberty to form an *Idea* of what appears most pleasing to them ; for that she was one of the most Lovely of her Sex, is evident from that prodigious Power of Charming which gain'd her almost as many Admirers, as she had Eyes to gaze upon her.

BUT to return to her Conversation with *Myrtano*;—It was such as was agreeable to their Characters, all Wit, all Elegance, all Tenderness, and Love; they were equally transported with each other, and 'tis hard to say which had the better in this Race of Passion. *Idalia*, indeed, testified hers no other way than in listning with a pleas'd Attention to his Vows; but there needed no more to make the happy Lover consider her as half obtain'd already, and tho he did not immediately press for the Gratification of his Wishes, he did not in the least despair. He made her several Visits, in which nothing happen'd of any greater consequence than to increase her Admirations of him. She never saw him without discovering some new Perfection; and that Height of Passion with which she at last regarded him, would be injured by an ordinary Lover's Imagination of it. But notwithstanding the rapturous Reflection of being beloved by a Man who appear'd so every way meritorious, she had pretty near as equal a share of Disquiet, that he had never in all his Sollicitations mention'd the least word of Marriage. A thousand, and a thousand times he had told her, That he lived but in her sight—That he should court Death as a Blessing, if any Accident should deprive him of her—That the united Charms of her whole Sex besides would be ineffectual to alienate his Thoughts one moment from her—and swore as many Vows of an eternal Constancy, as there were Saints in Heaven to witness 'em. She knew he aim'd with an unbounded Ardor to possess her,

her, but knew not by what way he wish'd to do so; and this, whenever it came cross her Thoughts, embitter'd all the Sweetness of his Love, and shock'd her to the Soul. She resolved at length to summon all her Courage, to say something to him which should oblige him to discover what his Intentions were; and she had no sooner fix'd herself in a Determination to do so, than she found she had more cause for it than before she had been sensible of.

THERE are Times when even the most prudent are not Masters of their Actions, how then could it be expected that the Young, Gay, Enflamed, *Myrtano* should have always the power of commanding his, in Opportunities such as he enjoy'd! As yet, indeed, he never had transgressed the strictest Rules of Decency; but *Desire* becoming, by Restraint, more fierce, at last grew wild, and would no longer endure to be controul'd by dull Respect.

HE never came to *Vicenza* but he staid a Night or two: A little Room adjoining to *Idalia's* Chamber was that in which they generally supp'd together, and seldom parted early. As they were entertaining each other on the usual Theme, and mingling Kisses with their Vows of Passion, by some Accident his Sleeve catching hold of a Corner of a Table on which the Lights were set, he threw it down: What Lover is not fond of Darkness! The impatient *Myrtano* blest the happy Chance, and thinking this the lucky Moment ordain'd

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ordain'd to give him all his Soul at present long'd for ; he snatch'd the trembling Fair, and easily finding his way into the next Room, bore her to the Bed, and was pretty near the Accomplishment of his Desires, before the Surprise she was in, at this sudden Change of his Behaviour, could permit her to make any Resistance ; but when she did, it was so strenuously, that without being guilty of the same Violence as Ferdinand had been, it was impossible for him to proceed. In spite of all the tender Passion with which she had regarded him—in spite of the secret Inclinations which, perhaps, at this very instant work'd very strongly within her in his favour—in spite of all his Tears, his Prayers, his Vows, her Virtue got the better and triumph'd o'er Dehre. But tho' she had gain'd, with such unequal Arms, a Conquest so truly glorious, she could not assure herself of maintaining it ; nor would consent to pardon his Attempt but on condition he would leave her, and retire that moment to his own Apartment. He, who was not of a Humour apt to despond, and had a real Passion for her, thought it best to comply, not doubting but a second Endeavour might prevail on her to bestow what he found he could not now obtain—but by Force.

BUT his Behaviour had wrought a quite different Effect on the Mind of Idalia than he imagin'd.—She had already suffer'd too much by that unruly Passion, which goes by the mistaken name of Love, to think the Man who took the same Measures had any other Design than to ruin her : and the Racks that she endured in endeavouring to vanquish a

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Tenderness which she had so much reason to believe an Enemy to her Honour, were past the reach of Thought. Resolving, however, to be certain of the Truth of what she fear'd, she put in execution the Design she before had form'd ; and as soon as she saw him come into her Chamber the next Morning, plucking up all the Courage she was mistress of, she saluted him in this manner : ‘ The Confusion I was in last night, said she, took from me the Power of resenting, as I ought, the mean Opinion your Behaviour testified you have of my Virtue. I had too entire a Confidence in your Honour to imagine you were capable of harbouring a Thought to my prejudice ; but as you have show'd me the Error I was guilty of, I should indeed deserve Contempt, could I consent to remain longer under a Roof where the Master of it makes so ill a use of the Power my fond Belief has given him.’ — It was to no purpose that he endeavour'd to qualify the Bitterness of these Reproaches, by all the tender Expressions he was able ; for perceiving he was yet far from making that Offer which alone could convince her he meant her fair, she grew more sensibly enraged, and now bent to try him to the utmost, ‘ Speak no more, Don Myrtano, resumed she ; the Man that would dishonour me can never love me.— Tis brutal Passion, not sincere Affection, that acts as you have done. Did you, indeed, believe me worthy of the Tenderness you so well can feign, Respect had govern'd Appetite, and fetter'd loose Desire.— All Wilches, all Inclination would have been stifled

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stifled till the Church's Sanction had made it lawful.—But I perceive, too late for my Repose, (*continued she, bursting into Tears*) that I am fallen too low for such a Hope.' She spoke no more for some time, both in expectation of his Answer, and to indulge a few Sighs, which the Suppression of had made uneasy to her. But he was too much confounded at her last words to be able to return an immediate Answer to 'em : He loved her indeed with a Transcendency of Passion, but there were many Reasons which oppos'd his marrying her ; it being wholly improper, however, for him to tell her so, he artfully evading the Question, turn'd the Discourse on the unbounded Force of Love, and how little it was in the power of a Person possess'd with it, to repel the most unexcusable Instigations of it. But *Idalia* perceiving, with an Infinity of Grief and Vexation, the Deceit, would not be so put off ; and in plain Terms assured him this should be the last Moment of his seeing her, unless he gave her some convincing Proof he had no other Intentions than what would be consistent with her Honour to approve of. Not all his Wit, not all his persuasive Eloquence, than which never Man had more, could furnish him with Expressions prevalent enough to occasion the least Alteration in her Humour.—She still insisted on the Article of Marriage, and he was at last obliged to confess that there were some Particulars in his Circumstances which as yet she was ignorant of, that made it impossible for him to answer her Demands in the manner she desired at present. He palliated, however, the Bitterness of this

Reply with ten thousand Protestations of eternal Love, and giving her a solemn Oath, that in a few Days she should be satisfy'd in every thing, engaged a Promise from her not to leave Vicenza till he return'd.

HERE was now an Alteration in the Fate of this distracted Lady, she thought herself the most wretched of created Beings; all that can be conceived of Shame, Despair, Grief, Rage, and Horror, is short of what she felt in this Disappointment of her high-rais'd Hopes.— She lov'd, she lov'd to Madness a Man whom she was now too sensible aim'd only at her Dishonour, and yet she was oblig'd to him, was still under his Roof; and what was worse, in the cruel Necessity of either still remaining so, or returning to Venice, the Thought of which was Death, after the Noise her late Adventures had made there.— Oh the Severity of the Struggle, when *Love* and *Virtue* are at variance, and rend the divided Soul with equal Fury! — Yet such was her Condition, and,unable entirely to vanquish the Efforts of either, by turns took part with both: and, 'tis uncertain whether wholly following the Emotions of her impatient Passion, she at last had not yielded to be Myrtano's on any Terms; or, guided by the other, had not resolved to quit his House, and fly the Danger which so imminently threaten'd her if she staid; if in the midst of her Distraction she had not receiv'd a Letter which at once determined her Resolve. It came to her the next Day after Myrtano had taken leave

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of her, and the Contents, which were written in an unknown Hand, were these:

### To Donna IDALIA DE BELLASACHE.

If your Willingness to believe, has not already rendered the Caution I would give you ineffectual, this may prevent the Ruin which is design'd for you.

MY Intimacy with Don Myrtano has not only drawn from him the Secret of your being lodged at his Villa, but also of the Professions he has made you: As you, perhaps, are ignorant of his Engagements with the Neice of Count Miramont, you may with the greater ease be brought to credit what he says.— But after the knowledge of it, it will, to the Punishment the Crime itself will draw upon you, add that of the Contempt of the whole World, Should you persist to listen to his Vows.— In time, most lovely Idalia, retire from a Place which is design'd your Scene of Ruin.— The vain, gay, inconstant Myrtano thinks no Woman worthy of a serious Passion.— And as Interest is the greatest Motive of his Marriage, so to triumph over the Weakness of your Sex, is the only Inducement to his Endeavours of adding to the number of those his Protestations have undone, the credulous Idalia.— I have no other Interest in giving you this Advice, than to save you the Shame and Misery of a too late Repentance, and my Friend the Sin of having occasion'd it.— What use you make of it, I shall be informed by

him

70 IDALIA: or,  
THE HISTORY OF

him who will not be at the pains of concealing any thing he accounts so trivial, as an Amour such as he is entring into with you.—Be kind, therefore, to yourself, fly his destructive Charms; and when you have escaped the Snare, shall know who was

RHOAELIUS

Your Adviser.

THIS was enclosed in another Paper, on which was writ these Lines:

SINCE I writ the Enclosed, I hear by Don Myrtano, that, apprised of his ungenerous Dealing, you design to quit his House; if it really be your Intention, you ought to have conceal'd it, since he resolves to take effectual Measures to secure you there, at least, till, by Force or Inflination, he has obtained a Gratification of his Desires— which he tells me shall be delay'd no longer than a few Days.

AS passionately enamour'd as Idalia was, she had a stock of Haughtiness, which nothing could surmount; and her Pride receiving as severe a shock by this Intelligence as her Virtue, it entirely turn'd the Scale, and weigh'd down Love.—'Death! said she to herself, dare he presume to think thus meanly of me?—Sollicited for a Prostitute, while in the mean time his serious Vows are addressed to another!—O Torture! What has the Neice of Miramont to boast superior to the Daughter of Bernardo?—False!—stupid!—blind!—ungrateful Traytor!—But I'll not endure it.—Daggers or Poisons shall revenge me.—I'll murder him, and then myself. In this manner

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manner did she rave, till almost breathless with the swelling Passion, she'd stop, and read the fatal Scroll again ; and coming to that part of it which mention'd that this unknown *Adviser* had his Intelligence from *Myrtano* himself,—Hell and Confusion, cry'd *sbe out*, the Villain has exposed me too ! — My easy Nature, and my fond Belief is Food for the base Mirth of all his lewd Companions — Every tender Folly, — each unguarded Languishment betray'd, and ridiculed.—Distraction ! Can I live and suffer it ! — Then contemplating farther on what she had read, — but yet, resumed *sbe*, this is the least of Ills that is already done, the Monster threatens me with more and greater.—Oh ! whither shall I turn to escape ? As she was employ'd in these perplex'd Meditations, a Servant that us'd to attend her in her Chamber, came in to ask if she wanted any thing. *Idalia*, who was by nature extremely violent in all her Passions, and had taken the least pains to vanquish them, could not contain herself before this Creature ; and Jealousy being the uppermost Emotion of her Soul, she presently enquired if she knew the Neice of Count *Miramont* ; to which the Wench having answered that she did— ‘ And is she handsome, cry'd *the other* impatiently ? ’ To an infinite degree, said *the cunning Creature*, Heaven never made a Face more beautiful, except your own.’—No Flattery, resumed *Idalia*, I am not in a Humour to receive it.—But if you would oblige, inform me of all you know concerning the intended Marriage between that Lady and your Master.’ *Ardella*, so she was call'd, affected a pro-

prodigious Surprize at these words, and suffered herself to be asked a hundred times before she made any Reply ; and when she did, it was in such a manner as gave no Satisfaction. This Behaviour put *Idalia* almost beside herself : she was persuaded that she knew more than she was willing to reveal ; and, wild with the Uncertainty, pray'd, promis'd, threaten'd, and accompany'd all she said with such Pressures, that the other appeared moved by 'em, and at last confessed, that her Master was indeed to be married to that Lady, that every thing was at that very time preparing for their Nuptials — and that never were two Persons more passionately charm'd with each other than they appear'd to be.

' But, Madam,' added she, with a well-contrifited Fear, ' should you reveal the least Syllable of what I have told you, to my Master, I am certain he would hot let me live an Hour.' — ' Trouble not yourself, cry'd *Idalia*, interrupting her, I never more will see him. — No, continued she, raising her Voice, and stamping, I call just Heaven, and every Saint to witness, I never will consent to see, or hear him more. — Too much already have I listned to his perjur'd Vows — which, when I do again, may all the Plagues of Earth and Hell fall on me. — May I be ruin'd, then thrown off to scorn — driveh round the World with no Companion but my Infamy, and not one Friend to pity, or relieve me, till some unlock'd for, horrid kind of Death o'erakes me, and sinks my Soul, with all its Load of Guilt, beyond the reach of Mercy.' — A thousand such like

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Imprecations did she make; but where to go to avoid the Penalty of them, she was for a good while undetermined. At last she remember'd to have heard of a Monastery at Verona, which being a Place she was utterly unknown at, she made choice of: It was there she designed to fix, knowing it would be easy for her immediately after she was introduced, to write to her Father for a Supply of Money, against the Time of her being initiated; for she was now in the mind to leave the World for ever. She could not think of quitting Myrtano's House without the knowledge of Ardella, and therefore communicated to her what her Intentions were; to which she, with a seeming Reluctance, consented, and promis'd to order things for her Departure with that Secrecy, that no other Servant in the Family should have any suspicion of it.

ALL the necessary Preparations for her little Journey being made, by Break of Day she left Vicenza; but with what Heart-akings, those who, like her, have tore themselves from all that's dear, can best be judge. At her Departure, she gave a Letter to Ardella, with a pressing Entreaty to deliver it to Myrtano; it was full of Upbraidings, mixed with Tenderness, and expressed in so moving a manner the Anguish of her Soul, that it was scarce possible for a Heart which had ever known the Force of Love, to read it without melting; and perhaps, even in the midst of her Indignation, was not without a Wish that it might bring him after her to Verona.— She had still Remains enough of Vanity to de-

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sure to have him in her power, tho' she had made so solemn a Vow never to make any other use of it, than to disdain and hate him.

BUT what befel her in her way to Verona, and the vast Variety of surprizing Incidents, which ensued each other thro' the whole Course of her unhappy Life, I must defer till another Opportunity; having already spun out the Beginning of her Misfortunes to such a length, that the Continuance of them would give me a just Apprehension of becoming tiresome to those I endeavour to divert.

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